

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An animal litter comprising:

non-swelling particles; and

bentonite particles ~~a swelling agent~~ coated on said non-swelling particles.
2. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said non-swelling particles are clay particles.
3. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 2 + wherein said clay particles comprise agglomerated clay fines.
4. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 3 wherein said clay fines have a size of about 50 mesh.
5. (canceled)
6. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said bentonite particles ~~are swelling agent~~ is a powder.
7. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said bentonite particles ~~have swelling agent~~ has a size range of about 100 mesh to about 300 mesh.
8. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 7 wherein said bentonite particles ~~have swelling agent~~ has a size of about 200 mesh.
9. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said non-swelling particles have a size range of about -10 to about +50 mesh.
10. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said bentonite particles ~~are swelling agent~~ is about 20% to about 40% by weight of said animal litter.
11. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 10 wherein said bentonite particles ~~are swelling agent~~ is about 25% to about 35% by weight of said animal litter.
12. An animal litter according to Claim 11 wherein said bentonite particles ~~are swelling agent~~ is about 28% by weight of said animal litter.

13. (original) An absorbent material comprising:
clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh; and
a coating for said particles, said coating comprising a bentonite powder.
14. (original) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said particles are agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size.
15. (currently amended) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said powder coating comprises powder particles of about 200 mesh in size.
16. (currently amended) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said powder coating comprises powder particles in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight of said absorbent material.
17. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter comprising:
clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh, said particles being agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size; and
a coating for said particles, said coating comprising bentonite.
18. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises a bentonite powder.
19. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises a bentonite powder and guar gum powder blend.
20. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises an odor control agent.
21. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises an anti-microbial agent.
22. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 18 ~~47~~ wherein said coating comprises bentonite particles with a size of about 200 mesh.
23. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles comprise Calcium-Montmorillonite fines.

24. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles have a moisture content from about 20% to about 40% before being coated.

25. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles have a moisture content from about 28% to about 34% before being coated.

26. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said litter has a moisture content from about 5% to about 15%.

27. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 26 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 8%.

28. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating is from about 20% to about 40% by weight of said litter.

29. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 28 wherein said coating is from about 25% to about 35% by weight of said litter.

30. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 29 wherein said coating is about 30% by weight of said litter.

31. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein the clay fines are agglomerated in a pin mixer.

32. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a clumping animal litter comprising:

agglomerating clay fines into particles; and

coating the particles with a bentonite powder.

33. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating clay fines using a pin mixer.

34. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating a blend of clay fines and bentonite fines using a pin mixer.

35. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating bentonite fines using a pin mixer.

36. (canceled)

37. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles with a bentonite powder and guar gum powder blend.

38. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles with a powder blended with a fragrance.

39. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles using at least one of a fluidized bed dryer, a semi-continuous centrifugal coater, and a rotary coating and drying system.

40. (original) A method according to Claim 32 further comprising drying the coated particles.

41. (original) A method according to Claim 40 wherein drying the coated particles comprises drying the particles to a moisture content from about 5% to about 15%.

42. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight of a coated particle.

43. (original) A method according to Claim 42 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 25% to about 35% by weight of a coated particle.

44. (original) A method according to Claim 43 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 28% by weight of a coated particle.

45. (original) A clumping animal litter comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh in size; and

bentonite powder of about 200 mesh, said powder applied as a coating to said particles in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight.

46. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size.

47. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said bentonite powder is sprayed ~~in a low concentration solution~~ on said clay particles placed in a fluidized bed.

48. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 5% to about 15%.

49. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 48 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 8%.

50. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from a blend of clay fines and bentonite fines of about -50 mesh in size.

51. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from bentonite fines of about -50 mesh in size.